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OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
Research and Analysis Branch

R & A No. 1084

A RECONSIDERED ESTIMATE OF FOREIGN CIVILIANS WORKING IN GERMANY

21 August 1943

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some may have gone to the Organization Todt for use in France or elsewhere. There is also the possibility that repatriations may have been appreciable during this spring. The estimate of 550,000 French workers in Germany on June 1 is therefore subject to considerable error. The same may be said of the estimate of 400,000 Belgians.

In estimating the Polish civilian workers we have made use of Wirtshaft und Statistik for March 1941, to establish the number of Polish civilians employed in Germany on that date (as contrasted to released prisoners of war).[1] Departure for Germany since that date are estimated mainly on the basis of German press reports, of which there are a considerable number.

The estimate of Soviet workers in Germany is derived as a residual. As the total and the other components are subject to considerable error, the figure for Soviet workers must be regarded as speculative.

It is not clear from any of the German statements on the subject what area is involved in the successive estimates. It is believed that the current legal frontiers of the Reich are the relevant ones. This would include the annexed Polish areas and Alsace-Lorraine. The number of foreign workers within the 1939 areas of Germany, which is the area used in other studies by the Labor Supply section, would probably be less by about a quarter of a million workers as of 1 June 1943.

C. On General Methods

The last reliable and detailed information on foreign workers in Germany by country of origin is provided by the Labor Front Census of Foreign Workers, 25 September 1941. The results of this Census were carried in the Reichsarbeitsblatt of 5 December 1941, and for convenient comparison they are given in the first Column of Table I.

A second Census of Foreign Workers was made on 30 January 1942. The detailed results of this Census have not been published, but the total number of workers counted was almost exactly the same as the September total -- 2,138,360.[2]

While there probably was some change in the distribution by country of origin of the foreign workers between September 1941 and January 1942, it is unlikely that the shifts were very large. The September 1941 distribution probably in general held good for 30 January, 1942. The status of January 1942 may therefore be taken as the last firm point for estimating foreign workers in Germany by country of origin.

However, by making use of the Reichsarbeitsblatt estimate of 3.5 millions of foreign workers in September 1942, a distribution by country of origin can be made by the residual method which is probably fairly reliable. Some information is available on the numbers of workers from Western Europe, and from this a fair guess of the number of workers from Soviet Territories can be made. This is the method which has been used in estimating the distribution of foreign workers by country of origin for September 1942.

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1. See LS-175. "Derivation of the Estimate of Polish Civilians Working in Germany," 30 April 1943.

2. Reichsarbeitsblatt, 5 May 1942, Part 5, p. 284.

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A. Conclusions

It is estimated that on 1 June 1943 there were 5 million foreign civilians working in Germany. The number of foreign workers in September 1942 was 3.5 millions, according to the Reichsarbeitsblatt.[1] Between September 1942 and June 1943 we estimate that perhaps 1.5 million foreigners have been recruited from all sources.

It is considered that the Reichsarbeitsblatt estimate of 3.5 million workers in September 1942, is a firm figure. The development since that date is speculative.

The development of the number of foreign workers at various dates and by country of origin is given in Table I. It should be noted that the number of Soviet workers is given as a residual.

This very large influx of foreign workers has been a main factor in the maintenance of the German economy. In spite of the mobilization since 1939 of twelve to thirteen million men, the net decline in the civilian labor force between May 1939 and May 1943 has been only 3 to 3½ millions. The Germans have therefore been able to maintain the economy on a fairly strong basis and provide a tolerable level of civilian consumption in spite of the enormous expenditure of manpower and resources on the war program.

The absorption into the German labor force of such a large number of foreign workers represents a remarkable achievement in organization considering the problems of recruitment, transportation, training, housing, clothing, feeding, and direction which have had to be overcome.

Between January 1942 and June 1943 the German program of recruitment of foreign workers was shifted over from a largely voluntary basis to a generally compulsory basis. At present the overwhelming majority of foreign workers in Germany are there under compulsion. There is no evidence available to show that the productivity of these foreign workers is greatly below the German average. The hostility towards Germany which most of the foreign workers feel may well at some future time create acute political problems for the German government, but so far the situation seems to have been kept well under control.

B. Special Comment

Some special comment is called for on the estimates of French, Belgian, Polish, and Soviet workers.

The large number of French and Belgian workers in Germany is due to the effective operation of conscription in those countries. The effectiveness of conscription is evident from the confidential reports of 16 French Prefects which have come into our hands, and also from the examination of hundreds of intercepted letters which mention the departure of conscripted French and Belgian men for Germany. Up to 30 March 1943, the Berlin-Vichy agreements covered the recruitment of 500,000 men for German service, and a further 250,000 were promised for the immediate future. It is not known whether all of these were intended for Germany;

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1. Reichsarbeitsblatt, 5 September 1942, part 5, pages 457-459.

Estimating the development over the 9-month period 5 September 1942 - 1 June 1943 has proved to be an exceptionally difficult problem. A very large mass of material of various kinds bearing on the question has been examined, but for one reason or another this material has not yielded conclusive evidence. The principal sources which have been examined are listed below, and some comments on the difficulties of using them follow:

1. Statements by German officials
2. German official publications
3. Captured German documents
4. Statements from Axis satellite governments
5. Intelligence reports
6. Intercepts
7. Official statements from United Nations Governments
8. Allied press and radio reports
9. Information from neutral correspondents
10. German press and radio statements
11. Prisoner of war interrogations.

It is recognized that the above classification is not entirely clear-cut as some of the sources derive ultimately from others, or overlap others. The above list may however serve as a guide.

1. Statements by German Officials. There have been few significant statements since the fall of 1942 on the subject of foreign workers by German officials. Goering, in a speech of 4 October 1942, reported by the FCC, stated that there were 6 million foreigners working in Germany, not counting prisoners of war. Erich Koch, Reich Commissar for the Ukraine, stated in August 1942 that there were 500,000 Ukrainians working in Germany.[1] In his speech of New Year's Day, 1943, Koch stated that there were 710,000 Ukrainians working in Germany.[2] A few other German officials have discussed the subject, including Sauckel and Ley, but none has given any definite figures.

Goering's statement scarcely deserves consideration, as it is far out of line with all other information on the subject, including the estimates of the Reich Labor Office. Koch's figure was given in the course of a speech in which he was, among other things, concerned in baiting Churchill and Roosevelt, and taken by itself it would not have much authority. On the other hand, it is consistent with our other figures and it may be correct.

2. Official German Publications. In general we have found that detailed statistics in the official German publications have been reliable. It is evident from the text of such publications as Wirtschaft und Statistik and the Reichsarbeitsblatt that the staffs of these statistical offices do not consider it their function to manipulate the data to accord with the government's propaganda. Many of the principal series, such as those on employment, have been suppressed, but we have not yet seen any evidence of the publication of a fraudulent series by any of the statistical offices.

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1. Novo Slovo, 23 August 1942.

2. Deutsche Ukraine Zeitung, 5 January 1943.

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TABLE I.

Foreign Workers in Germany

Country of Origin	September 1941 (1)	September 1942 (in thousands) (2)	June 1943 (in thousands) (3)
1. Belgium	121,501	225	400
2. Bulgaria	14,578	15	15
3. Denmark	28,895	30	35
4. France	48,567	100	550
5. Italy	271,667	300	300
6. Yugoslavia	108,791	132	182
7. Netherlands	92,995	200	250
8. Poland	1,007,561	1,308	1,548
9. Slovakia	80,037	210	220
10. Bohem. Mor.	140,052		
11. Hungary	34,990	35	30
12. Finland		-	3
13. Rumania		13	15
14. Baltic States	-	-	10
15. Greece		26	5
16. Norway	189,919	-	4
17. Spain		7	7
18. Sweden		1	1
19. French Africa		-	3
20. Soviet Union		898	1,422
TOTAL	2,139,553	3,500	5,000

Many of the detailed intelligence reports (as contrasted with global reports) appear to be factual, but there is no certain way of distinguishing the true from the false. And even if this problem were solved, there would be no way of proceeding from a number of scattered and fragmentary reports to general estimates.

So far, intelligence reports have not been usable, but the possibility remains that we may get reports which can be verified or which for some reason command acceptance.

6. Intercepts. Intercepts generally present problems of analysis exactly the opposite of those involved in using global intelligence reports. In the case of intercepts, the reliability of the data can usually be established at a glance. On the other hand, it has so far not been possible to base much quantitative work on intercepts.

We have recently for the first time attempted to use the intercepts in a systematic way to resolve some of the more refractory problems in this field. We have noted the number of references to foreign workers by nationality and by employment in letters of German origin. The assumption is that the number of references should be roughly proportional to the number of these workers present in Germany. We note that references to domestic servants seem to be more common than any other, evidently because of the direct influence of servants on the condition of family life. So far there have not been a sufficient number of references to support generalization. The number of references to Soviet servants is smaller than would be expected from the estimated total of Soviet workers and the generally accepted idea that Soviet workers are concentrated in domestic service.

Another use of the intercepts has been in answering the question, how effective is the conscription of workers in France and Belgium for work in Germany? There are frequent references in the intercepts to the departure of young men for Germany under compulsory service. These intercepts leave no doubt that conscription can be enforced and is being enforced in a very large number of cases. As the total to be conscripted is small compared with the supply of men, it does not matter greatly if part of the men succeed in evading the draft. All that is necessary to fill the quotas is that conscription should be effective in a substantial fraction of the cases.

This consideration has influenced us to accept the high estimate of recruitment of Belgian and French workers for Germany since September 1942.

7. Official Statements from United Nations Governments. Under this heading the statements of the Soviet, Belgian, Netherlands, Czechoslovak, Norwegian, and Polish governments have been of interest.

In part the appraisals made by these governments depend upon information of the same kind as that available to us. In part they may be able to make use of special information from refugees, intelligence reports, and so on which we do not have.

In the case of the Soviet government the statements released through the Soviet Information Bureau are of considerable interest. The Soviets undoubtedly have a great deal of information on the number of Soviet citizens working in Germany. This would come to them from documents captured in reoccupied Soviet areas and probably in other ways. We have not been able to use the material from the Soviet Information Bulletin, however. In part this is because the information given is too fragmentary, but there is an additional difficulty on account of

It is true that isolated total figures such as the figure of 3.5 million foreign workers given in the Reichsarbeitsblatt carry less conviction than detailed figures or figures in a series. However, it is believed that the Reichsarbeitsblatt figure for September 1942 is reliable and it has been made the point of departure for subsequent estimates.

Unfortunately no further figures on the number of foreign workers in Germany have appeared in the German official publications since September 1942.

3. Captured German Documents. Of these there have been one group only which bore on the question. This group consisted of applications by German firms for foreign labor. These applications had been forwarded to North Africa where they were captured. A few of the applications mentioned the number and nationality of foreign workers already employed by the firm. The information given is probably highly reliable. Unfortunately it was not of much use because (1) it was too old and (2) there were not enough reports to support any generalizations.

4. Statements from Axis Satellite Governments. Laval has made a number of speeches and statements on the recruitment of French workers for Germany, and these have been supplemented by communiques released through Havas and statements put out through the controlled radio.

On 12 December 1942, Havas stated that there were 250,000 French workers in Germany.

On 3 April 1943, the Lyons Radio in a broadcast heard by the FCC reported a meeting of the Council of Ministers at Vichy. President Laval informed the Council of his latest conversations with the German authorities. He also informed the Council that between 1 January and 30 March (last), 250,000 Frenchmen had gone to work in German factories, including 77,000 young men called up under the Compulsory Labor Service Act of 14 September 1942.

An official Vichy announcement, the details of which appeared in the Frankfurter Zeitung of 15 April 1943, revealed that Vichy had agreed to furnish a further batch of 250,000 workers for Germany. According to the Frankfurter Zeitung, this agreement had already been reached on 22 February 1943.

Thus, according to Vichy announcements there were about 250,000 French workers in Germany at the end of 1942; a further 250,000 were sent between 1 January 1943, and 30 March, for a total of about 500,000 on the latter date; and a further batch of 250,000 had been promised the Germans by the Vichy government. Allowing for some repatriation, the estimate for 1 June 1943, is 550,000.[1]

5. Intelligence Reports. A large number of Intelligence reports covering the whole question or parts of it are available. These come to us through US and Allied intelligence procurement agencies. They are of two kinds -- global estimates and detailed information.

Unfortunately, there is no satisfactory way of evaluating these reports. In most cases the reports can be discarded as worthless on account of internal evidence or on account of gross mistakes on points where we know the facts. In other cases there is no internal evidence against the report. Without knowing the ultimate source of the information for certain we do not consider it possible to depend on such reports.

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the propaganda character of the Bureau's releases. The Bureau has emphasized the large number of Soviet citizens carried off into slavery in Germany, and it may have tended towards exaggeration.

8. Allied Press and Radio Statements. Although we have taken note of comments on the situation appearing the daily and periodical press and on the radio in the Allied countries, we have not found this material to be of value. This is natural enough; no independent sources of information are available to press or radio.

9. Neutral Correspondents. Neutral correspondents have the advantage of being in Berlin where they can pick up rumors, inspired and otherwise. We have noted the stories published in Stockholm, Bern, and other neutral capitals purporting to give the facts on Germany's labor supply position, but we have not found these stories to be of any value.

10. German Press and Radio Statements. The German press has been read pretty thoroughly for information on the subject. The greater part of the press is ill-informed on Germany's situation, and has published contradictory and absurd statements on the number of foreign workers. A few papers have carried reliable information, usually originating in German official publications. In most cases it has been possible to work back to the official publication itself, so that the direct use of the German press has been small except for general information on the status of foreign workers in Germany. An exception is noted in the case of the Polish workers, where the German press seems to give a fairly good account of developments.

11. Prisoner of War Interrogations. Prisoners of war should be an excellent source of information on all aspects of the use of foreign labor in Germany. So far we have had the results of only a few interrogations bearing on the subject; these were excellent and would have been extremely useful if more had been available.

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OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
Research and Analysis Branch

TO: Mr. Chandler Morse DATE: August 21, 1945

FROM: Donald Wheeler R & A 1084

SUBJECT: A Reconsidered Estimate of Foreign Civilians Working in Germany

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Conclusions

It is estimated that on June 1, 1943 there were 5 million foreign civilians working in Germany. The number of foreign workers in September 1942 was 3.5 millions, according to the Reichsarbeitsblatt.[1] Between September 1942 and June 1943 we estimate that perhaps 1.5 million foreigners have been recruited from all sources.

It is considered that the Reichsarbeitsblatt estimate of 3.5 million workers in September 1942, is a firm figure. The development since that date is speculative.

The development of the number of foreign workers at various dates and by country of origin is given in Table I. It should be noted that the number of Soviet workers is given as a residual.

1/ Reichsarbeitsblatt, September 5, 1942, part 5, pages 437-439.

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This very large influx of foreign workers has been a main factor in the maintenance of the German economy. In spite of the mobilization since 1939 of twelve to thirteen million men, the net decline in the civilian labor force between May 1939 and May 1943 has been only 3 to 3 ½ millions. The Germans have therefore been able to maintain the economy on a fairly strong basis and provide a tolerable level of civilian consumption in spite of the enormous expenditure of manpower and resources on the war program.

The absorption into the German labor force of such a large number of foreign workers represents a remarkable achievement in organization considering the problems of recruitment, transportation, training, housing, clothing, feeding, and direction which have had to be overcome.

Between January 1942 and June 1943 the German program of recruitment of foreign workers was shifted over from a largely voluntary basis to a generally compulsory basis. At present the overwhelming majority of foreign workers in Germany are there under compulsion. There is no evidence available to show that the productivity of these foreign workers is greatly below the German average. The hostility towards Germany which

most of the foreign workers feel may well at some future time create acute political problems for the German government, but so far the situation seems to have been kept well under control.

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While there probably was some change in the distribution by country of origin of the foreign workers between September 1941 and January 1942, it is unlikely that the shifts were very large. The September 1941 distribution probably in general held good for January 30, 1942. The status of January 1942 may therefore be taken as the last firm point for estimating foreign workers in Germany by country of origin.

However, by making use of the Reichsarbeitsblatt estimate of 3.5 millions of foreign workers in Septem-

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1/ Reichsarbeitsblatt, May 5, 1942, Part 5, p. 284.

ber 1942, a distribution by country of origin can be made by the residual method which is probably fairly reliable. Some information is available on the numbers of workers from Western Europe, and from this a fair guess of the number of workers from Soviet Territories can be made. This is the method which has been used in estimating the distribution of foreign workers by country of origin for September 1942.

Estimating the development over the 9-month period September 5, 1942 - June 1, 1943 has proved to be an exceptionally difficult problem. A very large mass of material of various kinds bearing on the question has been examined, but for one reason or another this material has not yielded conclusive evidence. The principal sources which have been examined are listed below, and some comments on the difficulties of using them follow:

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10. German Press and Radio Statements. The German press has been read pretty thoroughly for information on the subject. The greater part of the press is

ill-informed on Germany's situation, and has published contradictory and absurd statements on the number of foreign workers. A few papers have carried reliable information, usually originating in German official publications. In most cases it has been possible to work back to the official publication itself, so that the direct use of the German press has been small except for general information on the status of foreign workers in Germany. An exception is noted in the case of the Polish workers, where the German press seems to give a fairly good account of developments.

11. Prisoner of War Interrogations. Prisoners of war should be an excellent source of information on all aspects of the use of foreign labor in Germany. So far we have had the results of only a few interrogations bearing on the subject; these were excellent and would have been extremely usefull if more had been available.

DNW/ecs